



## **Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Project**

### ***Progress on Promising Plans***

#### **Leadership Group Meeting Summary**

July 23, 2002, 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Town Hall, 1119 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue

#### **Meeting Objectives**

Pat Serie welcomed the group, outlined the agenda, and introduced Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Secretary Doug MacDonald and Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels.

#### **Introductory Remarks and Overview of Significant Progress Made**

Secretary MacDonald commended the viaduct process as one with an engaged and participating Leadership Group and public. He thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and believes it to be a remarkable process. He cautioned that the group has not locked into any future outcomes and encouraged the process of critical thinking to continue.

To date, the Leadership Group has been unconstrained fiscally and encouraged to create a long-term vision for the project. It is now time for the group to determine how to move forward, keeping realistic constraints in mind, and focusing on practical solutions. The Leadership Group must also examine the shorter-term opportunity to spend a smaller amount of money and begin a feasible and realistic portion of the project to both create a point of departure and project momentum.

The project direction has been established and a preferred alternative has been identified. The process will now ramp down until significant sources of revenue can be determined. Project enthusiasm has been broadly shared, but it must be married to the understanding that there are real choices to be made. No "band-aid" fix exists to remedy the seismic risk presented by the viaduct and it is clear that the Leadership Group respects the urgent need for the project.

Mayor Nickels thanked WSDOT and the Secretary for their hard work and cooperation, and expressed that he strongly endorses the tunnel plan as the preferred alternative. Swift action is critical for safety and economic reasons, and Mayor Nickels encouraged the group to take this opportunity to reconnect the city with the waterfront, catalyze transportation improvements, and recast the face of the city.

#### **Narrowing Our Focus – Opportunities and Challenges**

Maureen Sullivan, WSDOT Project Director, recapped the decision-making process to date, explaining that the group first narrowed 68 project concepts to 18, and further narrowed to five (plans A, B, C, D, and Rebuild). Three basic plans remain today:

- **Rebuild Plan:** A true rebuild of the viaduct and seawall (a partial rebuild will not adequately address safety and structural issues)
- **Aerial Plan:** Combines the best pieces of previous plans A and B. The seawall will be replaced as a separate facility, improvements would be made to Spokane Street, and a single-level aerial structure would be built along portions of the route
- **Tunnel Plan:** Combines the best pieces of previous plans C and D

The meeting will include discussion of the three plans and the possible phasing process to be implemented. Issues that will need additional consideration include noise and visual impacts, drainage plans, capacity, transportation demand management (TDM), mid-town access ramps, and others. Maureen explained that the project team is conducting activities in parallel to expedite the planning process. The budget and schedule being presented merge previous figures, and the time frame is based on moving forward at full speed dependent of funding. The Tunnel Plan has now moved into the favored plan position for most, as it tackles seismic risks, removes choke points, provides great access

opportunities, reconnects neighborhoods that were previously split, and begins to correct the “Mercer mess.”

### **Presentation of Three Plans**

Tom Madden, WSDOT Engineering Manager, presented a slideshow and electronic simulation of the corridor based on the three proposed project plans. He also described construction phasing if the Tunnel Plan were pursued. Under the first phase of the Tunnel Plan, emphasis will be placed on addressing components that alleviate the greatest risks first. The project team hopes to maintain a long-term vision throughout the process and avoid building temporary structures during Phase I to the extent possible.

Tom Madden and Bob Chandler, City of Seattle Project Manager, discussed the surface design and utility concerns associated with the project options. Bob expects lively discussions to occur about what to build on the surface, and explained that a broadly reaching, participatory process will be convened within the next several months to start making these decisions. All options would include a wider promenade, and primary concerns include streetcar/car/bicycle interactions, drainage issues, and electricity provision (three major electrical substations occur in the project vicinity). The project will need to integrate the current power grid and utilities corridor.

If the Tunnel Plan is ultimately built, a pedestrian would need to walk approximately 100 feet from the existing city sidewalks to the new promenade (the total width would be approximately 180 feet, a portion of which beyond the promenade could be developed). The project team would like to look at flexible transportation solutions, focusing on issues like expanding pedestrian corridors from the ferry terminal to the city (only one corridor currently exists, and may not meet the needs of many ferry travelers). The streetcar route could also be extended as far south as the Port or stadiums, and northward through the Battery Street Tunnel to Seattle Center and south Lake Union.

The project team also acknowledges that a better split between transit modes will be needed to better serve the community. Aspects to consider include employer incentive plans to get workers to use mass transit, revising parking strategies (parking space will be lost during construction), and creating shuttle services.

### **Questions**

Based on the information presented, Leadership Group members had the following questions and comments:

- Will access to downtown via Seneca Street be eliminated?
- What's the nature of the grade separation at Mercer and Roy?
- This project provides great opportunities at the surface for improved efficiencies in public transportation. To what extent is the project team working with Metro and other transit agencies? What attention is being paid to surface improvements for multi-modal surface transportation? Could we introduce more transit routes and cross-town connections?
- The tunnel option has reconfigured geometry, and the curves look gentler to the north. At what speeds could cars travel through the tunnels?
- For how many years would reduced speeds be needed?

### **Potential Funding Strategies**

Grace Crunican, Director of Seattle Department of Transportation, provided an update on funding with the primary message that time is money. The costs of labor and property are going up, but revenue estimates are capped. Thus, conclusions should be drawn early to allow for action. The process will be expensive (the EIS alone will cost an estimated \$60 million, nearly half of which has been acquired), and the project will need to slow to the pace of available funding. Potential funding sources include the State (\$450 million) and regional funding package (\$1.50-2 billion) and ideally collecting from several entities (i.e., City of Seattle, Army Corps of Engineers, Port of Seattle, other jurisdictions, and federal sources). As previously mentioned, the City of Seattle has committed \$5 million for project planning. Grace also explained that the group must think about funding structures and mechanisms in addition to sources, citing the Transportation Infrastructure and Innovations Act (TIFIA) as one possibility.

Dave Dye, WSDOT Urban Corridors Office Director, followed Grace's discussion with additional information about congestion pricing. Parsons Brinckerhoff has recently completed a study of funding that could be generated if the viaduct were tolled as either (a) an isolated facility or (b) as part of a transportation network including 131 miles of regional roadways. Results indicate that the project, if tolled alone, could raise \$6 to \$9 million. If combined with the network, the amount generated would increase to \$8 to \$15 million. Given these figures and an assumed 10-to-1 bonding ratio, up to \$100 million could be secured through bonding. Unfortunately, phasing causes a problem for collecting tolls, as funding to create tolling infrastructure is needed up front. Because tolls not only raise money but also help manage congestion, tolling objectives will need to be identified before developing a toll pricing scheme or strategy.

### **Leadership Group Feedback**

- Based on rough calculations, several Leadership Group members were concerned that the toll figures presented were not realistic. How would nearby surface streets be impacted if tolls were implemented? Is there enough capacity to absorb redirected trips? How can diverted trips be balanced with cost?
- Has the project team looked at cheaper alternatives for the cut-and-cover tunnels (i.e., fewer lanes)?
- Because there would be fewer mid-city on/off ramps at the conclusion of Phase I, where would traffic entering the tunnel be directed?
- It appears that the structure from the aquarium to the north will require entirely new construction. Are details available about seawall construction north of the aquarium? How will Ballard and Interbay be connected to the corridor in the short-term? How are construction-related traffic impacts being addressed?
- There will be pain to the public associated with the interaction of the main tunnel at Royal Brougham and the existing viaduct during Phase I.
- What about the railroad right-of-way if the trains lose their tunnel?
- If there will not be ramps at Seneca or northbound on-ramps in mid-town, Phase I has little value for many. What is being done for short-term/inner-city connections?
- How does the cut-and-cover tunnel connect to the Battery Street Tunnel? Will it go through some of the Art Institute and/or below the railroad tracks?
- It appears that the at-grade solution to the south (where 99 crosses two rail yards) would eliminate Whatcom Yard, which supports terminals 18 and 5 from the Port. Without land to move freight, those terminals will lose functionality. Although losing the railroad tunnel is not likely (and would be a bigger concern), losing Whatcom Yard would be unfortunate.
- Has the project team learned anything from the "Big Dig" in Boston about how to avoid problems?
- Key elements that could make the project successful would require integrating more than just transportation considerations (e.g., transit, land use, etc.). If we assume that we can increase transit ridership, we need to build transit funding into the project budget. We cannot count on funding from existing transit sources. Second, many easy TDM measures could be implemented. Because the Battery Street Tunnel is only four lanes wide, could we benefit by decreasing the total project corridor to 4 lanes (by increasing shoulders, etc.)?
- The Port of Seattle is thankful to have been consulted very closely throughout this process. The Port encourages the project team to look at what we are building for: current conditions and the next 50 to 100 years. Related local activities must also be considered. For example:
  - The Port (and the public) has recently invested \$500 million in terminals 5 and 18; it would be a shame if this investment were rendered less valuable because the viaduct project made the terminals less accessible (or useless).
  - Looking to the future, terminal 46 (88 acres) will not be in use in next 5 to 10 years, which will create an enormous potential addition to the city. Whatever is developed there will likely bring more people and trips into the city via the viaduct.
  - Other areas along the waterfront present similar examples of future land use changes (e.g., terminal 91, another 50-100 acres of potential activity, the connection of SR 509 to SeaTac Airport, etc.) for which we must build roadway capacity.

The project team must have a long-term perspective to plan appropriately. The Port also encouraged the project team to continue talking with them (often and openly!) about issues. Although some concerns still exist, the Port appreciates how closely they have been able to work with the team and believes that resolution can be reached on most problems.

- A neighborhood and pedestrian advocate appreciates the reconnection of streets in the north, and is thrilled that Phase I includes this measure. The local pedestrian board supports a combination of Plans C and D and believes that any solution should include pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. He voiced concern that pushing more traffic onto surface streets will erase potential advantages and opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists. Attention should also be called to the south-end at-grade crossing at about Royal Brougham, emphasizing that terrible parts of the city (from a pedestrian's perspective) exist under the roads that connect to I-90. This kind of space will double with the planned SR 519 project and others. What will the project team do under proposed aerial structures to make them kinder to pedestrians? There is life on the ground under huge structures (many people use these areas to access, for example, the stadiums). How will damage to pedestrian routes be mitigated? While the transportation project must be functional, it must also be tolerable to those on the ground.
- One member favors the tunnel, but is concerned about the loss of access to mid-town during Phase I. Once the viaduct comes down, could mid-town access be reestablished?
- Resolving the south Lake Union bottleneck is important, and attention to the Sculpture Park and Central Waterfront are appreciated. However, at the south end of the alignment near the King Street/Royal Brougham area, the project team is not thinking ahead about pedestrians or what the area could or will be. We must consider circulation in the east-west direction, as major transportation gaps still exist (e.g., Pioneer Square is still isolation from the waterfront due to ferry queues, etc.). The project team must work on connected improvement projects as we move ahead, such as bringing Piers 46 and 37 back into the fold.
- The process is working. In terms of funding, this project seems ideally suited to tax-increment financing (barring legality issues). This funding mechanism should be explored as the project moves forward.
- One group member favors the Tunnel Plan, and emphasizes that the project team must expect and plan for an entirely new Seattle over the next 100 years. From an engineering design standpoint, the four streets that will serve as off/on ingress/egress routes in the downtown area, as drawn, have large radii. The project team must make sure these 4-block areas do not become barriers to pedestrians.
- One group member reinforced the comments already heard from others: He is delighted that Pier 46 is again being discussed, and believes it necessary to begin looking at reconnecting the waterfront to the city and creating high-quality east/west connections. His fears that the viaduct will be removed, only to have larger pedestrian barriers created in terms of access to the waterfront. It is possible that surface alternatives could be impacted, and he suggests that land use on the open side of the city be considered carefully (perhaps even allow limited development to shrink the distance between the city and the waterfront?).
- One group member echoed support to "take back the waterfront," and felt the width of area available for development had great potential for dramatic improvements. Proceeding with the project correctly and effectively will help to attract money and find creative ways to finance the project. The Leadership Group offered regional support with representatives present from Kitsap County. He suggested that additional money could be added to the project budget to help integrate Sound Transit, the Monorail, or other transit options into the viaduct project.
- How will car traffic from ferries be handled while replacing the seawall in front of the ferry terminal? In the past, there has been talk about moving the ferry terminal south to reduce traffic interference. Perhaps Phase I could create an opportunity to move the ferry terminal south?
- Are passenger-only ferries being considered as a good addition to multi-modal hubs? Transit connections need to be more than just connections; to work effectively, transit must move people to where they need to go. We must focus on the system, not just separate transit components. Perhaps the viaduct project is the appropriate driver of this systemic discussion.
- One group member would like two pieces of Phase I to be completed earlier: Olympic Sculpture Park and the Roy Street improvement project.
- The public does not yet trust the process for such a high-cost project (having been conditioned by the schedule and budget overruns of other large projects like Sound Transit). We will need early wins to reassure people that we can actually succeed. A huge community education process needs to be undertaken, and will be necessary to get financial support. To compete nationally for funding, we will also need to be persuasive in our arguments and demonstrative in our successes. The

public is very concerned about sticker shock, and we must be sure to attract the support of the voting populous.

- The New York Times recently ran an article about the fact that large projects are consistently over budget. We need to look at how the private sector approaches projects to help us complete them on time and on budget. We'll need to repeatedly go back to the public to educate them and confirm our successes.
- Additional concern was raised about the south end of the project and the Whatcom Yard. Will Pier 25 be developed as a mega-port and, if so, how will this impact the project? What is planned for East Marginal Way, and how does the Port's plan mingle with the viaduct plan?

### **Next Steps**

The planning process is now winding down, and the focus has shifted to securing additional funding. Upcoming open houses will be held on July 24, 25, and 30. The next Leadership Group meeting will be held in mid-October and will include discussions of the toll study, first phase, and surface street options.

In closing remarks, the Secretary expressed thanks for the professional investment made by group members. He was most struck by the problem of continuing to persuade the public about the project's urgency. One key limitation is the large investment needed and the necessity of including many parts of the city. This project is more than just a simple corridor, and as group members continue to discuss the project, they should capture the broader reach that it entails. The potential significance of the project compels us to have a broader vision. Mayor Nickels also thanked the group for their participation and looks forward to the possibilities that await the city in the next century.

### **Leadership Group Members Present:**

Name	Affiliation
Bruce Agnew	Cascadia Discovery Institute
Tim Botkin	Kitsap County
Frank Chopp	Washington House of Representatives
Peter Coates	SBT
John Coney	Queen Anne Neighborhood Representative
Richard Conlin	Seattle City Council
Lee Copeland	Weinstein Copeland Architects
Steve Erickson	Magnolia Neighborhood Representative
David Goodyear	TY Lin
Tom Graff	Downtown District Council
Peter Hurley	Transportation Choices Coalition
Steve Leahy	Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce
Stephen Lundgren	Ballard Neighborhood Representative
Doug MacDonald	Secretary of Transportation
Dan Mathis	FHWA
Mary McCumber	Puget Sound Regional Council
Paige Miller	Port of Seattle Commission
Ed Murray	Washington State House of Representatives
John Musgrave	West Seattle Neighborhood Representative
Greg Nickels	Mayor of Seattle
Connie Niva	Washington State Transportation Commissioner
Pati Otley	BNSF
Ralph Pease	Argosy Cruises
Neil Peterson	FlexCar
Charles Roeder	University of Washington
Don Royse	Seattle Design Commission
Peter Steinbrueck	Seattle City Council
Harold Taniguchi	King County
Mike Thorne	Washington State Ferries
Tom Tierney	Port of Seattle
Paul Tomita	Seattle Planning Commissioner

Herald Ugles	ILWO
Doug Vann	Pioneer Square Neighborhood Representative
Steve Williamson	King County Labor Council
David Yeaworth	Allied Arts
Jim Young	Seattle Steam Company/Downtown Seattle Association

**Leadership Group Members Not Present:**

Name	Affiliation
Mary Lou Dickerson	Washington State House of Representatives
Joni Earl	Sound Transit
Christine Endresen	Kitsap County
Dan Evans	Daniel J. Evans and Associates
Dave Gering	Manufacturing and Industrial Council
Jerry Grinstein	Madrona Investments
Joel Horn	Elevated Transit Company
Fred Jarrett	Washington State House of Representatives
Jane Nishita	Qwest
Erik Poulsen	Washington State Senate
Margarita Prentice	Washington State Senate
Judy Runstad	Foster Pepper Shefelman

**Guests and Project Team Attendees:**

Name	Affiliation
David Allen	Seattle DOT
Bob Chandler	Seattle DOT
Grace Crunican	Seattle DOT
Anne Fiske-Zuniga	Seattle DOT
Richard Miller	Seattle DOT
Liz Rankin	Seattle DOT
Kristen Simpson	Seattle DOT
Steve Pearce	Seattle DOT
Susan Crowley	City of Seattle
David Dye	WSDOT
Rick Ellis	WSDOT
Carol Hunter	WSDOT
Tom Madden	WSDOT
Stephanie Miller	WSDOT
Renee Montgelas	WSDOT
John Okamoto	WSDOT
Maureen Sullivan	WSDOT
Paul Bott	Parsons Brinckerhoff
Gordon Clarke	Parsons Brinckerhoff
Mike Rigsby	Parsons Brinckerhoff
Jared Smith	Parsons Brinckerhoff
Robert Spillar	Parsons Brinckerhoff
Jeanine Viscount	Parsons Brinckerhoff
Karl Winterstein	Parsons Brinckerhoff
Bill Conner	Parsons Brinckerhoff
Amy Grotefendt	EnviroIssues
Brooke Belman	EnviroIssues
Sarah Brandt	EnviroIssues
Emilie O'Neil	EnviroIssues
Pat Serie	EnviroIssues
Bob Fernandes	Berger/Abam Engineers
Dave Mattern	Parametrix

Geri Poor	Port of Seattle
Lane E. Cubell	Seattle Design Commission
John Rahaim	Seattle Design Commission
Marty Curry	Seattle Planning Commission
Cara Baldrige	Seattle Art Museum
Erika Lindsay	Seattle Art Museum
Chris Rogers	Seattle Art Museum
David Foster	Citizen
Julia Hadley	Citizen
Gene Hogle	Citizen
Susan Musi	Citizen
Palmer Smith	Citizen
Newell Aldrich	Seattle City Council Member Nick Licata
Kevin Carl	Pioneer Square Neighborhood Association
Karen Daubert	Seattle Parks Foundation
Mary Fleckenstein	Washington State House of Representatives
Dick Hayes	Kitsap Transit
Charles A. Heffernan	City of Seattle Facilities & Real Estate
Brad Jurkovich	Washington House Democrats
Gina Kim	Seattle Times
Ann Matin	KCDOT
Kery Murakari	Seattle P-I
Ben Noble	Seattle City Council Central Staff
Kelly M. Ogilvie	Mayor's Office
William Oseran	Sea Tex
Dave Petrie	Petrie Transit Consultants
Stephanie Pure	Peter Steinbrueck's Office
John Rider	Consortium of Associated Coalitions
Celia Schorr	WSF
Mike Short	Kitsap County
David Spiken	Design Association
Brian Steinburg	"Waterfront for All"